

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 24)

During this stay in Makkah Mukarramah, we received abundant favours from the elder of the Tablighi Jamaat, Hazrat Maulana Sa'eed Khan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him). No Pakistani restaurants existed in the Haramain Shareefain in those days, so *desi* food was not available and we were not accustomed to Arab cuisine. After a long search we found a Moroccan restaurant which sold a dish named "*Dawud Pasha*", which looks similar to "*Kofta*". We would go there on days we were not invited anywhere for food. "*Ful*" would be traditionally served here for breakfast, which is a type of *daal* (lentil) which I was not fond of. This breakfast did away with eggs, but our bad habit would not recognize any food as breakfast which did not contain eggs. After much search we discovered that "*Mutabbaq*" is sold in certain shops long after sunrise, at about 9 am (which was equivalent to 3am according to the Arabic Time prevailing in those days), which is a *paratha*-like bread stuffed with eggs or bananas. We began having it as breakfast, but the restaurants serving *Mutabbaq* did not serve tea. Black tea would thus be drunk in some coffee shop afterwards. But after a few days, Hazrat Maulana Sa'eed Khan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) insisted and began sending breakfast from his house.

Hazrat Maulana Sa'eed Khan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) had a distinctive taste for visiting the notable sites of Makkah Mukarramah, and was also quite knowledgeable about them. He personally took us to several of the sites. The house of Hazrat Khadeeja tul-Kubrah (may Allah be pleased with her), in which the noble leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him) resided, was located in a high neighbourhood in front of Bab us-Salaam. It had been converted into a Madrasa in those days. We got to visit it several times. Regrettably, it has not been conserved any more. The house of Hazrat Siddiq al-Akbar (may Allah be pleased with him) was located to the south-west of the *Haram*, near where today Sharikah Makkah (Abraaj Hilton's) eastern part is located (God knows how long even this building will remain). A Madrasa for teaching the Noble Quran was established here as well. When we reached this place, I recalled that one time Hazrat Siddiq al-Akbar (may Allah be pleased with him) had left Makkah Mukarramah with the intention of migrating from it. On the way, a tribal leader named Ibn ad-Daghanah dissuaded him and brought him back to Makkah Mukarramah under his protection. After some time Hazrat Siddiq al-Akbar (may Allah be pleased with him) made a Masjid in the courtyard of his house. When he would pray there, he would become engrossed in the recitation of the Quran and weep much, and a crowd of women and children of the polytheists would throng around him. The polytheists feared that the miraculous charm of the Noble Quran may induce their women and children to leave their religion. At this, they complained to Ibn ad-Daghanah: "You had granted him your protection on the condition that he would not recite the Quran publicly. Now he has started doing it openly, due to which we fear for our women and children". Ibn ad-Daghanah tried to convince Hazrat Siddiq al-Akbar (may Allah be pleased with him), but Hazrat Siddiq al-Akbar (may Allah be pleased with him) replied: "I don't

need anyone's protection besides Allah's". At that very place where the polytheists feared that their children may leave their religion due to his recitation, today children were learning the Noble Quran!

Under the guidance of Hazrat Maulana Sa'eed Khan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him), we were blessed with visiting the grave of Hazrat Khadija tul-Kubra in Jannat ul-Ma'laa. He also pointed out the location of the graves of Hazrat Haji Imdadullah Sahab Muhajir Makki and Hazrat Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanvi (may Allah's mercy be upon them both), and we visited them as well. He also showed us the valley of Abi Talib, where the noble leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him) resided during the boycott of Banu Hashim by the polytheists, as well as the house of Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

One of the neighbourhoods in the lower areas of Makkah Mukarramah is called "*Haarrat ush-Shuhadaa*", and it is popularly believed that Hazrat Khalid Bin Walid (may Allah be pleased with him) entered Makkah Mukarramah through this route, and that some skirmish also took place here. Some graves are located in this area, about which it is popularly believed that they are the graves of those noble *Sahaba* who were martyred during that clash, and it is for this reason that this neighbourhood is called "*Ash-Shuhadaa*" (Allah the Pure knows best). A Masjid is located here which is also the *Markaz* (centre) of the *Tablighi Jamaat* here, and similar to the *Markazes* in other places, *Shab-e-Juma* (weekly program on Thursday night) takes place here as well. We went there on the evening of Thursday, 12 Safar 1383H (equivalent to 20 July 1963), with Hazrat Maulana Sa'eed Khan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him) and spent the night there and also participated in the gathering of the *Tablighi Jamaat*. The next morning, Maulana informed us that the grave of Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is located nearby. He thus took us to the grave, and we were blessed with the opportunity to present our reverential *Salaam* (greetings) to that prominent companion whose childhood and early youth was spent in the companionship of the noble leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him), and whose middle and old ages in teaching and spreading his sayings and actions to the world. رضي الله تعالى عنه وأرضاه! (May Allah the Most High be pleased with him and make him pleased!) We prayed Friday prayer back in the sacred *Haram*.

Since most of the people had gone back after performing Hajj, there was no crowd in the sacred *Haram* at all, and we would get to kiss the *Hajar al-Aswad* (black stone) during *Tawaf* with ease. It was also easy to present oneself at *Multazam* and *Hajar Ismail* (peace be upon him), so the bliss and tranquility experienced in the sacred *Haram* is indescribable.

A lecture of Hadith by an elderly Maliki scholar of Makkah Mukarramah, Hazrat Shaykh Hasan al-Mashaat (may Allah's mercy be upon him), took place here after Maghrib. He was teaching Sunan Nasai at the time. We presented ourselves in his service, and on the evening of 18 Safar 1383H, equivalent to 10 July 1963, he read the Hadith *Musalsal Bil Awwaliyyah* and gave me *ijazah* for it and all his *marwiiyyaat* (narrations), and also bestowed his *thabat* (endorsement) with his signature, which is still preserved with me. Thereafter I was blessed with the opportunity to attend his lectures of Sunan Nasai as well. His appearance, dressing and habits exuded the Sunnah. His white turban was similar to the turban worn by the scholars of the Indian subcontinent. He would meet every visitor very warmly, and would also answer their questions and advise them, and being present in his lectures would infuse us

with such rapture, as if we were sitting in the lecture of a pious personality from the *Salaf* (pious predecessors). The enjoyment experienced in this lecture would sometimes put me in a dilemma; should I perform *Tawaf* after Maghrib or attend this lecture?

After praying Juma and Asar in the sacred *Haram* on 20 Safar 1383H (equivalent to 12 July), we departed for Taif along with some companions. We prayed Maghrib in Mina and, passing through Arafah on the way, reached the foot of Mount Kura'. Apparently this route to Taif which passes through Mount Kura' was the same which the noble leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him) took to Taif for preaching the Deen. The highway had only recently begun being constructed at the time, so this route remained closed for most of the week and one had to take the long route from "*Sayl*". But that day it was open, and we reached Taif in around three hours. The heat was at its peak in Makkah Mukarramah, but here the weather was cool. We spent the night in a Masjid here, and the next day we were blessed with praying in the Masjid of Hazrat Abdullah Bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and offering *Salam* (greetings of peace) at his grave. Hazrat Abdullah Bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) had migrated to Taif for the reason that it is difficult to fulfill the rights of the sanctity and honour of Makkah Mukarramah while residing therein. He only reached the tender age of ten during the lifetime of the noble leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him), but as a result of his (peace be upon him) supplication, Allah Ta'ala had bestowed upon him an extraordinary understanding of the Noble Quran, due to which he is considered the *Imam* (leader) of *Mufasssir* (commentators of the Noble Quran). We students can never recompense him for his favours.

That same day, with some acquaintances as our guides, we visited "*Hada*" which is a place that is situated somewhat lower than Taif. The noble leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him), losing heart from the oppression and cruelty of the people of Makkah, went to Taif with the hope that perhaps the people of Taif will accept guidance. But the leaders of Taif treated him very rudely, and roguish boys threw stones at him until he became wounded. Hazrat Zaid Bin Harithah, who was his sole companion, would himself stand in front of the stones to protect the noble messenger (peace be upon him). Despite this, his (peace be upon him) feet were so severely wounded that they began to bleed. On his return from Taif on that occasion, he passed by the garden of Utba and Shaiba and rested under the shade of a tree. It is said about a garden in "*Hada*" that that is the garden where the noble messenger (peace be upon him) rested for a while. And the locals say about a stone under the shade of a particular tree that he (peace be upon him) had rested on that very stone. While there is no way to investigate and verify this, there is also no reason to reject it since it is popularly believed by the locals. We thus also visited that garden and that stone. The eyes welled up imagining the greatest well-wisher of the universe (peace be upon him) bloodied with the worry for the Ummah; the one who had come as a mercy for the entire universe, what reception did he receive from those who were ingratitude personified? And how did that embodiment of mercy reply? He (peace be upon him) made this emotionally powerful supplication:

اللهم إليك أشكو ضَعْفَ قُوَّتِي و قَلَّةَ حِيلَتِي و هَوَانِي عَلَى النَّاسِ. يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ! أَنْتَ رَبُّ الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ، إِلَى مَنْ تَكَلَّنِي؟ إِلَى عَدُوِّ بَعِيدٍ يَتَجَهَّمَنِي، أَمْ إِلَى صَدِيقٍ قَرِيبٍ مَلَكْتَهُ أَمْرِي. إِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ غَضَبَانِ عَلَيَّ فَلَا أُبَالِي، غَيْرَ أَنَّ عَافِيَتَكَ أَوْسَعُ لِي. أَعُوذُ بِنُورِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِي أَشْرَقَتْ لَهُ الظُّلُمَاتُ، وَ صُلِحَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ أَنْ تُنْزِلَ بِي غَضَبَكَ أَوْ يَجِلَّ بِي سَخَطُكَ، وَ لَكَ الْعُتْبَى حَتَّى تَرْضَى وَ لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ.

“O Allah! It is to you alone that I complain of my weakness, lack of means, and my significance in the eyes of people. O the Most Merciful of those who show mercy! You are the Lord of the weak. To whom will you entrust me? To a malicious enemy who will oppress me, or to the hands of a sympathetic friend whom You have entrusted my affair? (O Allah!) if You are not displeased with me then I do not care for such things. Even so, Your protection will be easier for me. I seek protection in the Light of Your Countenance – which has lighted the darkneses and which sets right all affairs of this world and the Hereafter – from that You send down Your anger on me, or that Your displeasure descends upon me. Your good will is to be constantly sought until You are pleased. There is no power or strength except through You.”

Probably this was also the place where Allah Ta’ala sent the angel responsible for mountains with the message that, if you wish, two mountains can be brought together to crush the people of this town. But millions of blessings and *Salams* (greetings of peace) on that embodiment of mercy (peace be upon him) who said that perhaps Allah Ta’ala will produce such people from their progeny who would accept the truth and spread it. Thereafter such a time did come to pass when the people of Taif accepted Islam. Not only that, a member of their tribe of Thaqif was Muhammad Bin Qasim who later conquered Sindh and spread the light of Islam in the subcontinent, and it is through him that we are blessed with the gift of *Iman* (belief) today.

We returned from this site with our hearts imagining those favours of the leader of the two worlds (peace be upon him). To return to Makkah Mukarramah the next day, we took the other route which is called the route of “*Sayl*”. This route does not feature any mountains, rather level ground so subtly slopes downwards that one does not even notice that one is moving down from higher ground. On this way occurs that place where, in the time of *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic times), the festival of “*Okaz*” used to be held. Gatherings of poetry and dance would take place here, and the noble messenger (peace be upon him) used to come here as well to spread the message of Islam. Thereafter came the place called “*Ji’ranah*”, which is opposite “*Qarn ul-Manazil*”, the *Meeqat* for people coming from this side. The noble messenger (peace be upon him) had donned the Ihram from here on his return from the battle of Hunayn, and also after returning from Taif, and performed Umrah. We were also blessed with donning the Ihram from here, and performed Umrah after reaching Makkah Mukarramah.

After returning from Taif we were blessed with the treasure of spending five days in Makkah Mukarramah. And eventually, after praying Juma, we departed from Makkah Mukarramah with heavy hearts. We kept looking behind us at the minarets of the sacred Haram for long, not knowing when we would get to see them again. After reaching Jeddah we spent the night there, and on the afternoon of Saturday 20 July 1963, equivalent to 28 Safar 1383H, we boarded *Safeena-e-Hujja* for our return journey. The ship raised anchor after Asar, and we remained standing on the upper deck till long, gazing at the coastline of the Arabic Peninsula receding from us, until it appeared like a khaki line sketched on the horizon. Gradually that line faded away into the darkness and the sun also hid itself into the sea. And then there was the sea for seven days, and us. As long as the ship sailed atop the Red Sea, the sea remained so tranquil that it appeared like a plain ground extending into the horizon. And the humidity was also intense, with the wind not felt even at the top deck. Despite the weather I would spend most of my time at the upper deck, sitting in a comfortable chair and penning down the travelogue of this

most holy and beautiful trip. And the ship reached Aden in due course. After Asar, we sailed to the port on small boats, as we did the previous time, and after spending some time at the shore and offering our *salams* (greetings) at the grave of Shaykh Ahmad Iraqi (may Allah's mercy be upon him), we took a taxi and headed for the market of Crater. The market of Crater was a free port, so items were sold tax-free here. We thus strolled around and did some shopping for our family. Both of us brothers had put our passport, ticket and all cash in a small bag which could be hung around the neck, and I was the one wearing it. I would remove it from my neck whenever we had to buy something and hold it in my hand. After Isha, we took a taxi to return, but when we reached Steamer Point and it was time to pay the taxi driver, I suddenly realized that the bag was missing. We searched the entire taxi whatever we could, but were left shell-shocked when it was not to be found. Now we did not even have enough money to pay the taxi driver; nor passports, nor tickets which are the lifeline for any traveler. Without passports and tickets, there was also no way we could return to the ship and complete our remaining journey. Furthermore, we were also aware that the ladder used by passengers to climb onto the ship will be removed by midnight, and we would be left alone as aliens in this strange land, without any means to return home or any place to stay. We also had no idea where we may have left the bag, while the taxi driver was demanding to get his fare and return. Even to return with him we needed money, which we did not have. Shivers run down my spine whenever I recall that state of utter helplessness.

In such states of utter helplessness, man finds no support except supplication to Allah Ta'ala. Heartfelt supplication poured out from the bottom of my heart: "O Allah! Please remove us from this trial somehow." In the meanwhile, another taxi stopped next to ours from which some high-ranked officers of the ship, with whom we had become friends in the past five days, alighted. They had arrived to return to the ship. We told them the whole story. As for the missing passports and tickets, they also had no solution, but they lent us sufficient cash to be able to pay the current and later fares of the taxi. As a result, we at least had a way to return to Crater. The second thing we requested from them was to inform the captain of our predicament, and since the ship was scheduled to depart at nine or ten the next morning, to request him not to remove the ladder to the ship until just before departure. They promised to do this and we headed back to Crater. We racked our brains throughout the journey to remember where we may have left it, but to no avail. We had been to so many places throughout the day that there was no way to pinpoint where we may have left it. We just continuously recited **إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ** (We certainly belong to Allah, and to Him we are bound to return) and the following verse of the Noble Quran, about which we had heard from elders that recitation of this verse is beneficial when trying to find something missing:

يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِنْ حَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ تَرَى اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ

(Luqman: 16)

Translation: (Luqman went on saying to his son,) "My dear son, in fact, if there be anything to the measure of a grain of rye, and it be (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Surely, Allah is All-Fine, All-Aware."

When we reached Crater while continuously reciting this verse, we found its shops closing down. Amongst the labyrinth of intertwined streets we did not even remember where all we had been to. Whichever closing shop we would visit, the shopkeeper would blankly refuse, until all the shops closed down one by one and silence permeated the air. We were completely lost for what to do next. Utterly exhausted from the lack of rest the whole day, we thought that the last option remaining for us was to spend the night here and resume our search the next day, since shops open early in the morning. We spotted a small hotel nearby and decided to spend the night there. But the room rate turned out to be beyond what we possessed. There was a Masjid nearby, but when we visited it we were told that it was locked after Isha. Thus, it was not possible to sleep therein. All apparent means were exhausted, and it seemed we had no option but to spend the night out in the street. We were rambling around in that state of utter helplessness, continuously reciting the verse, when, while crossing the next street, we spotted a light bulb shimmering feebly along that street. It seemed like that shop was still open, and we could also faintly recall visiting that shop before. When we reached the shop, the shopkeeper had half-closed the shutter and was doing bookkeeping. Finding two strangers popping up at such an inopportune time upset his mood and he announced the closure of the shop in a rather stern tone. But we narrated our story to him with our tone exuding humility and helplessness. Hearing us, he replied that there is no such *shintah* (bag) here. With our last ray of hope fading away, such helplessness and gloom engulfed our faces that it evoked sympathy in his heart. He asked: "What did that *shintah* look like? And what did it contain?" We blurted out all the details. He said: "OK. Wait a while." And with that he went to the upper portion of the shop. Each passing moment spent waiting grew more agonizing than the previous one, and we began supplicating with increased humility. When he returned after a while, the bag could be clearly seen in his hand. Beholding it, it felt as if we had received a new life. He passed it to us with the words: "Never do this again." What else did we need! We returned as gratitude personified, took a taxi and reached Steamer Point, and found the last boat to the ship ready to sail. When we boarded the ship at around 12am, we found the crew members to whom we had narrated our predicament waiting for us, and they were delighted to see us. We repaid our debt with thanks, and when we reached our beds in our rooms, we realized how great a blessing this temporary place of rest is, though we had received it for only a few days. My *Shaikh* (spiritual mentor) Hazrat Aarifi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) used to say that when you lie down on your comfortable bed at home, just imagine for a while if you were on a journey and lost your way in the night, or your car broke down in the middle of a jungle, how much would you miss this bed of yours, and how great a blessing would you consider it? Now that you have been given it without any effort, do excessive thanks for it before going to sleep. We enjoy innumerable blessings of Allah Ta'ala while taking them for granted, and do not thank Him for them. The cure for this negligence is to imagine our plight if this blessing were taken away from us. Situations like these provide an opportunity to value the blessings of Allah Ta'ala.